



December 12, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of Hopkins County Schools, our parents, our students, and our teachers, we proudly support the Fiscal Court's initiative to improve access to broadband internet in Hopkins County. Our students and teachers rely heavily on access to affordable and fast internet. Our teachers have substantially increased the use of various social media platforms to communicate with students and parents. These methods of communication are vital to keeping parents informed of the assignments that are due, upcoming assessments, permission forms, and sharing all the great things that are going on in classrooms throughout Hopkins County Schools.

Not only do we rely on broadband internet for communication with students and parents, but teachers in our schools have increasingly been using Google Classroom to provide online instruction to students. Google Classroom is how teachers link daily assignments and important classroom information in one central location for their students. It does not stop at Google Classroom. There are online learning tools that teachers use in the classroom on a regular basis, that with increased utilization at home can help improve learning in the classroom. For that to happen, our students need access to quality broadband internet. The great thing about these tools is that they are accessible on a mobile device.

Starting in 2015-2016, Hopkins County Schools received permission to use up to 10 NTI (Non-Traditional Instruction) Days to continue teaching while students are out of school due to inclement weather. These NTI Days require students to complete assignments online through Study Island, Google Classroom, or other online learning tools. These days are vital to the continuation of learning in our community and increase student and parent communication with teachers while not in school.

NTI days may create issues for students who do not have adequate access to quality broadband internet. Students without access are provided paper copies of assignments. Students must keep track of those assignments over multiple days. When students misplace their assignments, they must be provided another copy to complete their work. Students with reliable access to broadband internet are much more likely to complete their assignment while not in school. Increased mobile technology availability has created new avenues for our students and teachers, but without quality home internet access, that technology does not prove to be as useful and in actuality becomes more burdensome for teachers to embed into classroom instruction.

Sincerely,

Deanna A. Ashby  
Superintendent